



## The local sector in Senegal questions fictitious joint ventures

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Following the termination of the EU-Senegal fisheries agreement in 2006, European boats should have left Senegalese waters. But Senegalese fishermen have denounced joint ventures as a cover for European interests: 'Here, you have Italians, and there, it's a Greek vessel', explains a representative of the Dakar harbour authorities. Apart from a dozen French and Spanish hand-liners, only Senegalese companies are allowed to fish in the country's waters. However, joint ventures, 51% Senegalese capital and 49% foreign capital, can also obtain fishing licences. According to the general secretary of the Senegalese boat-owners association, half of the 'Senegalese' fishing companies are composed of such joint ventures.

For many, these joint ventures are only a façade, and it is clear that company control remains in the hands of the European partner. The Senegalese administration prefers to turn a blind eye, rather than re-examining the licences of enterprises for which 'Senegalisation' is considered fictitious by the local fishing-sector professionals. Furthermore, despite the fact that the granting of new licences was frozen in 2006, Senegalese authorities continue to issue licences. At the termination of the EU-Senegal fisheries agreement in 2006, about 30 European boats left, but others, particularly coastal demersal trawlers, have almost doubled their presence (from 34 vessels in 2006 to 61 in 2008), thanks to such joint ventures. These vessels fish between 6 and 12 miles from the coast, and enter sometimes into direct conflict with pirogues.

### Sources

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### Editorial comment

This example shows once again that the absence of an FPA with the EU does not mean that EU vessels cannot get access to ACP countries' waters since private agreements are possible. Moreover, it shows that the access of EU vessels in the absence of an agreement can undermine sustainable exploitation as seems to be the case in Senegal. Despite the freezing of granting fishing licenses, the number of trawlers from EU origin has almost doubled. Since, according to the international law of the sea, the flag state is responsible for issuing fishing licences, it illustrates the importance of reinforcing governance and transparency in the allocation of access. In cases where vessels of EU origin seek EU (or EU member state) support to reflag in third countries, there is a need for the EU to find ways to keep track of these vessels, to ensure that their activities will not undermine sustainable fisheries development in the third country concerned.

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